

# Maryland SHIP "Health Action" Newsletter

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November 1, 2013

## Baltimore City's *Healthy Baltimore 2015 Interim Status Report*

The [\*Healthy Baltimore 2015 Interim Status Report\*](#) was recently released. The report highlights the progress Baltimore City has made in meeting the goals of its Healthy Baltimore 2015 initiative and discusses programs and initiatives that reflect collaborative work between city and local agencies in order to improve the health of residents. As indicated in the report,

Baltimore's average life expectancy has increased by more than a year and a half to 73.5 years. According to Dr. Oxiris Barbot, Baltimore City's Health Commissioner, major contributors to improved life expectancy include a decline in youth homicides, HIV infections and deaths, heart disease deaths, and infant mortality.

Click [here](#) for more information about Baltimore's health progress.

Click [here](#) to access the Healthy Baltimore 2015 Interim Status Report.

View the [\*\*SHIP measure\*\*](#) for increasing life expectancy.

## Maryland Medicaid Expands Reimbursement for Telehealth Services



The Maryland Medicaid program is expanding its reimbursements to include approved health care providers for services delivered via telemedicine. In the past, Medicaid only reimbursed telemedicine services for mental health consultation. As part of the [\*\*Telemental Health Program\*\*](#),

the Rural Access Telemedicine Program and the Cardiovascular Disease and Stroke Telemedicine Program will be implemented to improve access to care and patient health outcomes. The program is meant to provide improved care in rural areas with a shortage of specialists, including Allegany, Calvert, Cecil, Charles, Dorchester, Garret, Kent, St. Mary's, Somerset, Talbot, Queen Anne's, Worcester, Wicomico, and Washington Counties.

Click [here](#) to read the DHMH press release.

Click [here](#) for more information about DHMH Telecommunication.

View the [SHIP measure](#) and [tools](#) for reducing emergency department visits related to behavioral health.

### End of Life Health Services Forum



Underutilization of hospice services by African Americans has been attributed to cultural, environmental, religious, and historical factors. Approximately 41% of deaths that occurred in the U.S. in 2009 used hospice services, with only 8.7% of African Americans utilizing them. A recently published literature review, [\*Barriers in Hospice Use Among African Americans with Cancer\*](#), explores the barriers preventing African Americans with cancer from using hospice services. The desire for aggressive care, lack of knowledge of hospice services, lack of diversity among hospice staff, religious beliefs, mistrust of the healthcare system, and lack of access to hospice services were identified as barriers to use.

On November 6, 2013, from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., a forum, "Helping Families at Life's End," will be held at Morgan State University, in Baltimore, MD. The forum is intended to provide education about hospice services and how to obtain healthcare through the Affordable Care Act.

Click [here](#) to see the event flyer.

Click [here](#) to view the *Barriers in Hospice Use Among African Americans with Cancer* literature review.

Click [here](#) to view the SHIP Healthy Aging Featured Topic.

View the [SHIP measure](#) and [tools](#) for increasing the proportion of people with health insurance.

### Sickweather.com Uses Social Media to Track Illness



Sickweather.com tracks and identifies the areas where people are sick by scanning social networks for indicators of illness. Thousands of people update social media Web-sites including Facebook and Twitter when they or someone they know gets sick,

allowing Sickweather to record and map health data. This resource allows users to track the chance of sickness as easily as

tracking the chance of rain.

When several reports appear near one another at approximately the same time, they are grouped as "potential storm activity." The zoom feature allows users to see individual reports and more detailed information about health risks in their community. Sickweather can be used to track illnesses, compare symptoms, and see which viruses are spreading in an area. Users can connect with Facebook and Twitter to find sick friends, recommend home remedies, or just say, "Get well soon!"

Click [here](#) for more information about Sickweather.com

## News from the Office of Primary Care Access

### Rural Network Development Grant

The Rural Network Development grant is due on December 6, 2013, at 11:59 p.m. ET. To assist individuals interested in applying for the grant, a technical assistance recording will be available until December 1, 2013. To access the recording, dial [866-463-4105](#), and enter the passcode 5246. The recording will offer grant guidance and additional information regarding the application process.

### Upcoming Events

December 4 -5, 2013: Rural Multiracial and Multicultural Health Conferences, San Antonio, TX.

Click [here](#) for more information.

February 4 -6, 2014: Rural Health Policy Institute, Washington, DC.

Click [here](#) for more information.